

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal  
CONDUCTED BY  
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 1016, NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MAY 19, 1888.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## "A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XXII. ENOCH ARDEN.

"DEAR BERESFORD,—My poor father died in an apoplectic fit, which was not what the doctor expected. He was looking over some old papers, bills and things, when it happened, and died before Meldon came. He had sent for Meldon the night before. The funeral will be on Wednesday—quite private—and I shall have to stay here for a week or two to see to things before I can return to Hammersley. Many thanks for the letter, which I shall not use, if I can help it. Meldon was sent for to make some changes in the will, but he doesn't know what, or won't say. He's very close. I think I shall keep him on and all the rest—at least, for the present.

"My poor father looks very like himself. It was so terribly sudden that I hardly realise it yet, though every one is talking of it, and people are full of sympathy; and tenants coming bothering me about farms as if I could settle anything at such a time. I see I shall have a good deal to look into and arrange before I return to you, and the shock has been so sudden besides. I have written to May by this post. If you have said anything to her about your letter, tell her that I shall not make use of it.

"Yours very truly,

"AUGUSTUS GOWER"

The letter to May was, with the exception of some allusions to the shock and pain of his bereavement scattered here and there through it, a love-letter, pure and simple, of a singularly boyish and uninteresting kind.

"Gower says he has written to you,"

Fred said, when he had got May to himself after breakfast.

"Yes; he seems in great trouble. It was terrible not to have a word of forgiveness or explanation—terrible!"

"It must have been a great relief to him, though, to find that his letter had nothing whatever to do with it."

"Does he say so?"

"He says that he died in a fit of apoplexy while looking over old accounts. He was a great screw, you know."

"He doesn't want us to think it had anything to do with it, he is so generous."

"He's a good fellow; he says he will make no use of the confession I sent him."

"Confession?"

"Yes; I couldn't let him take the blame of this, after what you said. If you thought it had anything to do with his death, others would think it; so I wrote a full confession for him to use as he liked."

"Oh, Fred; I'm so glad! It was just like you; I'm so glad!"

"It was the only thing to do," Fred rejoined with a lofty self-complacency which was not, by any means, all assumed.

"And he refuses to use it. There never was any one so generous!"

Even Fred was wise enough to know that such pronounced praise did not prove love. In truth, it proved May's guilty consciousness of inability to love or to make Gower any return for his generosity.

She could no more bear to read his letter a second time than a ruined man can bear to look again through the accounts of his hopeless liabilities. She flung it into the fire the moment she could do so unseen, and then hurried out to walk down some of her wretchedness in the woods, where alone she could be secure of solitude.

Now these woods were sacred to Hugh's memory. There was no nook or corner in them, and hardly a tree which had not some association with him, pleasant and plaintive as sad music; and it was not possible to go through them at any time, whatever her prepossession, without yearning remembrance of him.

This idea of his life would sweetly creep  
Into her study of imagination.

But to-day other associations—the associations of love, of the source and force of which she was unconscious—brought back Hugh's memory more persistently and vividly than ever before. She drank deep draughts of it to the drowning of all thoughts of her present wretchedness, until, in her unnerved state, Hugh seemed somehow beside her.

As she sat down beneath a giant oak which he had often in old days helped her to climb, and which was scarred on each big limb with her initials cut deeply and deftly long ago with his great clasp knife, she felt growing upon her in the green gloom and in the eerie stillness an extraordinarily vivid sense of his nearness. It grew and grew till her lips parted, her breath came quicker, her eyes widened, and she had that strange and thrilling impression, which one sometimes has at night when unnerved and alone, of a being behind you. You fear to turn your head lest you should realise your dread; but May feared to turn hers lest she should lose the happy illusion. When, however, she was forced at last by an irresistible fascination to turn her head, she saw Hugh advancing swiftly towards her through a dim and narrow aisle of the wood. So real and intense had been the impression of his presence, that the actual sight of him seemed but the continuation of her day-dream. She watched him approach without a start, or exclamation, or stir, or quiver of an eyelid till her fixed look of fascination made him cry when within a pace or two:

"It's me, May; not my ghost, I assure you."

"Hugh!" she cried.

"You thought I was dead?"

But she still looked up blankly at him as though she were waking slowly from a dream of which the voice and words of one who wakes you come to be part.

"I've startled you," he said with a sudden change to anxiety in his tone.

"It is Hugh!" she cried, springing up with sudden excitement and energy, and holding out to him both her hands. The

next moment, however, she re-seated herself with her back against the tree, dizzy, faint, and white to the lips.

"You are ill!" he cried, kneeling by her side and taking out his travelling flask.

She waved it away with a hand which he caught and held.

"I — was — startled," she gasped presently.

"I ought to have written; but I thought I should have been here as soon as my letter. I've not been home yet," he said hurriedly, holding still her hand and bending over her anxiously. "You thought me a ghost?" he added, as May remained silent, leaning back with closed eyes against the tree.

She opened her eyes and looked up intently at him for a little before she said:

"You've been very ill."

"No; I've been in jail—rather a bad jail—which pulled me down a bit. I was taken as a prisoner of war by the Peruvians, though I had no more to do with the business than you; and I couldn't get free till the peace, for all my British protestations. You all thought me dead, I suppose?"

May looked all round her, and then up into his face again to reassure herself it was no dream.

"I half thought it was a dream," she said with such an expression of childlike wonder in her smile as made him almost think for a moment it was the old May that sat there beside him as of old. "I was thinking of you, till the strangest, strongest feeling that you were behind me made me look round, and—there you were! I was so sure of your being there that I was not startled at all at first—or glad even! Oh, Hugh! I cannot tell you—I cannot tell you how glad I am!" she cried, and then broke down with a sob and a shower of happy tears.

He stooped and kissed her, and fondled tenderly the little hand he held, but was himself too much moved to speak.

"Did you see father?" she asked presently, hoping by this indifferent question to regain command of herself.

"No! there was no one in, but I found dear old Con in the garden, who sent me after you here. It was almost worth while being away so long to get Con's welcome. He blessed me again and again, with the tears running down his cheeks, as if I had done him some great kindness in coming back. By the way, he frightened me about you; he said he feared you were in some trouble."

"I?"

"Yes; and some trouble which I might get you out of, too—"I thought it was in Heaven you were, and you've dropped from there, anyhow, between Miss May and harm," he said; but he wouldn't explain what he meant."

May withdrew her hand from his, and turned away her face to hide from him its scarlet. Then, rising suddenly, she said:

"Father will long so to see you; your own father could not have been more anxious and wretched about you; and mother——"

"May, tell me," Hugh cried, interrupting her, and speaking with breathless eagerness, "what is it? What is this trouble? Are you—are you—am I too late?"

Here was a precipitous plunge five minutes after his first meeting with May as a woman! But in all these years this hope had grown to be so much a part of his life—of himself—that it burst naturally from his lips in his agitation.

All the blood in May's body seemed to surge suddenly into her face, and as suddenly to retire, leaving her so faint that she was fain to reseat herself.

"May, forgive me. I hardly know what I am saying; but I've so long thought of this, lived for this—only this could have kept me alive in that frightful prison—that I cannot help expressing the fear that has tortured me day and night for months and months. If you knew how many thousand times I have asked myself, 'Shall I have a chance? Will she even be free?' you would understand, you would forgive me. You do, dear?"

Was there ever in the world such a proposal made ten minutes after meeting the girl for the first time since her childhood? Yet more singular than the proposal, perhaps, was May's not thinking it singular.

In the pure and charming love dreams of childhood—which are to the passionate love dreams of youth as moonshine is to sunshine, light without heat, a mere lambent reflection of the unrisen, scorching splendour to come—in these soft, moonlight dreams Hugh had been May's ideal knight, who would one day return to lay all at her feet. And afterwards, when she and all had thought him dead, he remained her ideal standard with whom she compared every one, to the immeasurable disadvantage of all her admirers.

Thus May's mind had become almost as

much familiarised with the idea of Hugh as a suitor, as Hugh's mind had become with the idea of May as the hope and happiness of his life. She knew that Hugh had intended, and had announced his intention, of one day coming home to win her; and if he lived—she knew also—he would hold to his resolve.

Hugh's headlong proposal, therefore, did not startle May, however much it embarrassed, humbled, and tortured her. What her loveless engagement to Gower really was—odious, degrading, insupportable—was disclosed to her in all its naked hideousness. A few minutes since, if she knew that she had no love for Gower, at least she was unconscious of love for another. But now she knew that she loved Hugh with her whole heart and soul. She had loved him all her life—so loved him that, had she known he still lived, nothing and no one could have persuaded her, or terrified her into an engagement with Gower. For her engagement was now in her eyes, a kind of horrible apostasy.

Such thoughts rushed in a whirl through her mind, while Hugh was pouring out in a headlong torrent the pent up love of his life. For, as she still remained silent, Hugh, misconstruing her silence, proceeded to apologise for his abrupt and mad proposal by an ardent and incoherent history of his love for her. He had loved her from childhood; had declared to her father, at his last visit, his love for her, and his resolve to return and try to win her; and in all the intervening years this hope had sustained and cheered him, and had been the only thing he had cared to live for during his terrible imprisonment. When, then, this suspicion of what Con meant had suddenly occurred to him, he could not contain himself. This Hugh delivered himself of as his apology with a wild and fervid incoherence.

"Hugh," cried May, interrupting him impulsively before he had finished, "Hugh, I ought not to have listened to you. I am engaged."

Here there fell a blank silence, filled for both with despair.

"I ought not to have listened to you, but—but I could not help it," May cried, childishly and desperately, after a little.

"You're not offended?" Hugh answered eagerly, winning from her words and tone a faint, vague hope.

"Offended! Oh, Hugh, if I had only known——" Here she paused in utter disgust with herself. Was this fair to Mr.

Gower? And Hugh! What could he think of this suggestion that her heart was at the command of the first that asked for it?

"May, it was not your own doing!" cried Hugh, with a sudden conviction that this engagement was of Mrs. Beresford's making.

"I didn't mean that at all," May replied helplessly. "But I'm so sorry to pain you! I cannot tell you how sorry I am."

"You can hardly accuse yourself of giving me encouragement," Hugh answered with a short laugh, not pleasant to hear. He had now no doubt that May's distress meant merely pity for him, and her pity was as gall in the wound. Ashamed the next moment of his petulance, he added: "There was hardly time for it, was there? It is I who should feel sorry and ashamed to have given you pain without any kind of reason or provocation. But you will forgive me for old sake's sake, May?"

She could not for tears make answer for some moments, and then she struggled to say:

"I am not changed, and can never change to you, Hugh—never! You've not been out of my thoughts, I think, for a single day since you left us. And when we heard—when we heard——" Here, at the thought at once of his supposed death, of his return to life and to her, she again broke down. "Oh, Hugh!" she sobbed; "I can hardly believe it yet. It is wonderful! I was thinking of you, till I was quite certain you were beside me; and there you were! I never in all my life felt so happy as at that moment. And now I never felt more miserable."

"I have been such a brute and idiot. If I had only waited an hour, I should have heard of this, and held my tongue."

"No, no; I'm glad you spoke. I mean—I don't know what I mean. But do not speak of it again, Hugh; I cannot bear it."

Hugh naturally set down this shrinking from all reference to the subject to her sisterly affection for him and to her more than womanly pitifulness. Accordingly he resolved never to torment her by troubling her himself, or by allowing others to trouble her about it. He would, of course, confide to the Vicar his proposal and rejection, but he would exact from him at the same time a promise never to speak of them to May. He would make the shortest possible stay at the Vicarage, or, indeed, in

England, which he would quit this time for ever.

While Hugh was mentally making these resolutions of loyal compliance with May's adjuration, "never to speak of it again," May, in her heart, and with all her heart, was thirsting to hear of it again with the thirst of the desert. With a still deeper thirst she longed to hint to Hugh her love for him, although she yet felt it to be the basest treachery to Gower. When they talked of old times, she took care to let him know how she had treasured up his most insignificant words and acts as the Scriptures of her memory; how she came, when she could, alone into these woods, to live over again their old days together there; and how almost every nook and corner of them was historic to her through some association with him.

If Hugh had not been the least of a coxcomb of any man in the world, he would have perceived that she was in love with him all her life. As it was, however, he perceived only that she had been in love with him in her childhood, in the unconscious and whole-hearted manner of that trustful age, and that this love would have developed into all he sought for, if only he had returned in time, or even, perhaps, if he had been known by her to be alive. This miserable "might have been" rather intensified than lightened his wretchedness, through intensifying his love and his disappointment. He felt all the despair and anguish of an Enoch Arden, without the sustaining sense of self-sacrifice. If he had spared May the pain of the foolish and frantic avowal of his love, he would have found in such self-suppression some fortitude to support him in this total wreck of his hope and happiness. But he had neither this sense of heroism, nor this comfort of having left May's life untroubled, to sustain him. For the first time, in a life full of dangers and desperate straits, he was utterly cast down.

"You've not told me who he is," he said at last, with a desperate effort, in order to remind himself how little these maddening reminiscences of May's meant to him now.

"He's a Mr. Gower, a college friend of Fred's," May answered, turning hot and cold as quickly as the scarlet flushed and faded in her cheeks.

"Is he staying with you now?" asked Hugh, turning the barbed spear-head in his wound with the strange fascination



the tortured sometimes feel to intensify of themselves their sufferings.

"No; his father died very suddenly while he was here."

"Is it of long standing?"

"No; only the other day."

The silence which followed was filled to the brim with torture to both.

"Well," Hugh cried at last, springing up, for they had been seated for some minutes in an old haunt of theirs. "I have left myself little time to see your father and mother."

May was too much stupefied to answer for a little. She remained still seated, looking up at him with wide eyes. Was he going at once—that day; and going for ever? When he did go, it would be for ever—of this she was certain—and his words could mean only that he was going that day.

"Hugh, you cannot mean that you are going to-day?" she was able to say presently.

"It will be better."

"No; you cannot; you cannot, Hugh!" she cried, rising, seizing his hand in both of hers, and looking up at him piteously with imploring eyes and quivering lips. An absolutely irresistible impulse made him clasp her suddenly in his arms and kiss her passionately.

"You see now that I must go," he said almost with a sob as he released her.

Hereon May nearly lost all control over herself.

"Hugh, I cannot——" "Give you up," she had almost said; but, after a moment's hesitation, she replaced it by—"let you go—not yet."

Hugh smoothed back the hair from her forehead with both hands—which she felt shake as in palsy—while all the love of all these years seemed to shine down from his eyes, to be reflected from hers; but otherwise he did not speak.

"You will not go?" she faltered, feeling herself grow faint and dizzy under the blaze of his eyes and all the passionate love and worship it expressed.

"I don't know that I can," he answered with a world of meaning in the words and in the sigh of despair with which he uttered them.

It is almost incredible that he could look into her eyes or hear the tone and tremor of her voice without discerning her love; but, having understood her to say that her engagement to Gower was of her own spontaneous making, he could not doubt her love for his rival.

May he knew well was the last person in the world to give her hand without her heart, or to give her heart one week to one man, and the next to another. Wherefore, Hugh, being naturally diffident, and doubly diffident in this case through his extravagant worship of May, found no hope for himself in the love which looked through her yearning eyes or trembled in her faltering voice. It was only a sister's love!

On the other hand, when May had come somewhat to herself and had realised how nearly she had betrayed herself, and how dangerous was the further prolongation of their talk, she suddenly remembered how impatient her father would be to see Hugh. He had probably followed him into the woods only to lose him and to return home disappointed. For May had taken Hugh zigzag through all their favourite haunts of old, both in and out of the woods, not without quoting to him what she had often and often repeated of him and of these haunts to herself:

I climb the hill; from end to end  
Of all the landscape underneath,  
I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
Or low morass or whispering reed,  
Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheep-walk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw,  
That hears the latest linnet trill;  
Nor quarry trenched along the hill,  
And haunted by the wrangling daw.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A DANIEL COME TO JUDGEMENT.

BEFORE they reached the Vicarage they encountered the Vicar, who had, as May supposed, been for some time in search of them.

"My boy," he said to Hugh with an emotion he could hardly control, as he grasped and held his hand without shaking it. "My boy! I thought I should never see you again in this world."

"I couldn't write, sir; not in time. I came here first," was all Hugh was able to say. The Vicar read what had passed between them as plainly in their faces as though Hugh had already confided it to him. He was miserably sorry for Hugh, and, for the first time in his life, almost angry with May. What on earth could she have seen in this Gower—a mere boy without one single sensible idea in his

head? And no one was more keenly conscious of his deadly dullness than herself only a week or so since. How she had groaned under it and laughed over it! Her acceptance of Gower was to herself and to her father, as intelligible and defensible to-day as a week since; but it did not seem so. Whatever was then to be said for it was to be said for it still; but Hugh's appearance dimmed it to darkness as sunrise dims a taper.

And not Gower only was so dimmed by Hugh's appearance, but also, as we say, whatever reasons or excuses seemed plausible but yesterday in extenuation of May's engagement to him, were dimmed to invisibility. Wherefore her father was disappointed almost to impatience and anger with May because of an engagement which he had regarded calmly enough when it was entered on. This May was not slow to perceive, in part, perhaps, because she was prepared for it, and in part because she could read her father's face as a book. She saw at once from his manner to Hugh that her father had divined his proposal and rejection, and from his manner to herself that he was disappointed in her; and it needed only her father's disapproval, and—as she put it bitterly to herself—his contempt, to fill to overflowing her wretchedness.

It was, therefore, a miserable walk to the Vicarage—the more miserable as being Hugh's welcome back to life. The Vicar questioned him about his disappearance, and Hugh answered to the questions absently and perfunctorily, his mind plainly being recalled with difficulty to each as it was put. May was absolutely silent, and the moment she reached the Vicarage she hurried up to her room to abandon herself utterly to her despair. Hugh turned at once into the study instead of asking to see Mrs. Beresford, and the Vicar followed him, with no doubt at all as to the character of the confidence he was about to hear.

"Dear old place! I've had many a headache here," Hugh said, as he stood in the middle of the room looking at the backs of those abominable books. "How I wish I was back again in it, and in those dear old days! Ah, well, they're gone, and what made them so happy is gone with them. You know what that was, sir, and how it's gone," he said, facing the Vicar. "I told you I would come back to try my fortune, and I have, and—and—it was the hope of all my life, sir," he said

with a sudden break in his voice, turning sharply away to look out of the window.

The Vicar put his hand upon his shoulder and let it rest there, but made no other reply.

"I could not help speaking, sir," Hugh said after a painful pause, keeping still his face averted. "I could not help speaking, though I suspected from something Con said that I was too late. I ought to have waited, and made sure about it, and spared her a great trouble; for it's a great trouble to her, sir. Heaven bless her!"

"It could not be anything else, Hugh, to her or to me."

"I couldn't help it," Hugh reiterated more to himself than to the Vicar. "It was what I always lived for, and the only thing I cared to live for lately. I declare, sir, but for it I should have longed to die and be done with it in that infernal dungeon; and I should have died, too, I believe. I wish I—well, it's no good blubbering or blustering about it; it can't be helped."

"If we had only known; if you had only come a month ago. She always worshipped you," the Vicar cried incoherently in his agitation.

"Only a month ago?"

"She has not known him longer."

Hugh's first thought was of exceeding bitterness. May to engage herself to a man she had known but a month! Was this the May of his lifelong worship? But something of bitterness in the Vicar's tone rallied his chivalrous loyalty to her side. If her father resented this hasty engagement, and showed her that he resented it, she would be yet more miserable about it.

"After all, a month under one roof means a good deal, sir; she would know more of him in that way than most girls know of the men they marry."

The Vicar could not say that he thought that this more intimate knowledge of Gower was precisely what made the engagement indefensible.

As he remained silent Hugh said presently:

"I hope he's worthy of her, sir; as worthy of her at least as a man can be."

"He seems a good fellow," answered the Vicar—grudging praise which was uttered in so half-hearted a tone as left Hugh in no doubt of his disapproval of the engagement. He felt utterly ashamed of his momentary gratification at this disapproval, which meant only unhappiness to May.

"She's not the kind of a girl to make a

mistake; I mean, to accept a man merely for his looks or manners."

"I don't think they had much to do with it," answered the Vicar, with a suspicion of sarcasm in his tone.

"What does Mrs. Beresford think of it?"

"She approves of it," replied the Vicar, curtly, adding, after a moment's pause, "he's a very good match from a worldly point of view."

"I haven't seen her yet," cried Hugh, with sudden compunction; and the unsatisfactory interview was at an end.

Meanwhile, May, in her own room, abandoned herself to utter despair. She flung herself upon the bed, looking into what seemed to her dead, black, eternal darkness. She loved Hugh; with her whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength she loved him, and he was forever lost to her. For a long time this one thought swallowed up all others in total eclipse; but, at last, there showed behind it her engagement to Gower. How odious it now appeared to her. How monstrous; how wicked! Was it right—would or could anything make it right to marry a man for whom she cared nothing, while loving another as she loved Hugh? Was this not wrong all round, and most of all wrong to Mr. Gower himself? Thus conscience, which but now pleaded against her, seemed suddenly to turn to take her side—like Portia, an unlooked for and thrice welcome ally and advocate.

In the Buddhist "Tri-Pitakas" occurs this, the finest definition of religion we have ever met. "What is religion? It is the perfect agreement of the will with the conscience." But the converse of this, "the perfect agreement of the conscience with the will"—not the same thing exactly—is the ordinary form religion takes with us. Let the will but get hold of the tiller, and it will so tack that the wind of conscience, let it blow whithersoever it listeth, will waft it indirectly towards its goal.

In May's case, anyway, it was amazing with what sudden force it struck her that her engagement to Gower was as wrong as it was odious to her. It broke upon her like the light of a sudden revelation, and roused her from her stupor to a state of feverish excitement. She must forthwith see Fred, and so put this irresistible case to him that he would help her to break her engagement. In fact, her state of feeling at this moment was simply a violent reaction from her blank and black despair

of a moment before. Springing from the bed she hurried from the room in a breathless search for Fred, whom she found smoking in his bedroom.

"Fred! Hugh has come back!"

"So I hear," Fred replied coolly, puffing a column of smoke in rings to the ceiling.

"Haven't you seen him? He's downstairs."

"Oh, I shall see him soon enough, I dare say. He's not going back to China or Peru to-night, I suppose."

May's case ceased suddenly to seem to her irresistible. Indeed, she did not know now how or where to begin.

"I cannot tell you how glad I was to see him again," she said lamely enough.

"Tell him. I don't take much interest in the matter, to tell you the truth. We never hit it off together somehow."

"But it wasn't about him I came to speak to you," May said with a sudden change in her tone. As she paused here, Fred said "Yes?" inquiringly holding his pipe from his lips and looking up at her in some surprise, and even anxiety.

"It was about Mr. Gower—about our engagement. Fred, it's not right. Not right to him when I do not care for him," she said hurriedly and incoherently.

"And who's 'him'? Hugh Grey?"

"What do you mean?" she cried, flushing scarlet.

"What do you mean? You can't mean that it's not right to Gower, for he's the best judge of that himself. He knows how much or how little you care for him, and he gave up all his prospects for it. But now that his father's dead, and he has no hold on us, you want to break your bargain! I declare I never heard anything meaner in all my life. It is mean, May; you know it is; and no one in the world would think it meaner than yourself if you hadn't got this new idea into your head."

"What new idea?"

"Hugh Grey, then, if you want plain speaking. Do you mean to tell me that if Hugh Grey hadn't turned up you would have thought of throwing Gower over in this way? And what will Gower think of it? What would any one think of it? What would you think of it yourself if it were some one else who jilted a man to whom she owed so much the moment she got out of his power?"

"That had nothing at all to do with it!" May cried hotly, and on the brink of adding, "It was not I that was in his

power," for the truth, even more than the brutality, of Fred's speech exasperated her.

"But it has to do with it," Fred retorted petulantly. "If Gower's father were alive you could not have thought of jilting him."

This was really too much even for May, and even from Fred.

"Fred, you ought to be the last to say that."

"Because it was I let you in for it? If that's what you mean it's a pity you didn't think in this way of it in time, and didn't let me get out of it my own way."

As May remained silent, Fred thought it well to change his tack.

"I'm an ill-conditioned beast, I know, May; but you've no idea how I've been worried by all sorts of things; and then this comes! I owe Gower so much, and he's been so generous—more than generous about this—that the idea of your throwing him over now is enough to drive me wild—now isn't it? What can he think of us? What explanation can you give? You can't say that you've seen some one you liked better since he left us a week since; and what else is there to say? All that about not caring for him as you ought you said already; but it didn't prevent him giving up everything for your sake, and it didn't prevent you accepting him either. What has occurred since to change you, except Hugh Grey's turning up to-day? And you could hardly give him this as an explanation. I declare, May, if you throw him over like this after all he has done for us, I can never dare to look him in the face again."

It was not a flattering glass Fred held up to her, presenting the obverse face of the conduct she had thought a few minutes since so conscientious and becoming; but May was too candid not to acknowledge to herself the substantial truth of the reflection. If anything, she was given to almost morbid introspection and self-accusation, and Fred's rough speaking "had turned her eyes into her very soul," and showed her in what a fool's paradise of conscience she had been living for the last few minutes.

No girl in the world was more shudderingly sensitive to the coarse disgrace expressed by such phrases as "jilting," "throwing over." And did they not express plainly, yet precisely, what she had but now meditated doing as a conscientious

duty? How could she have so sophisticated her conscience as to make it seem to dictate the precise opposite of her real duty? She had now by another reaction come to see with still clearer certainty that the precise opposite was her real duty. Had it not the note, too, whereby religious girls, like May, recognise duty—the note of unpleasantness?

Altogether May quitted Fred's room—which she left without another word to him—exceedingly angry both with herself for the truth of his charges, and with him for his plain speaking. Her anger with him for his plain speaking, again, was fiercer from the hidden fire beneath it of her resentment of his antipathy to Hugh. She could more easily have forgiven his calling her "a jilt," than his contemptuous indifference about Hugh. Plainly he was not in the least interested in Hugh's return to life, if, indeed, he did not even resent it. It ought to surprise no one that this made more against Fred, and contributed more to May's disenchantment with him, than either his forgery or the selfishness and ingratitude he showed about it.

It seemed to need only this last drop of her estrangement from Fred to make May's cup of misery overflow. She could look now to no one for sympathy, since even her father despised her, while her mother and Fred were ranged on the other side. On the other side, too, her conscience was now ranged irrevocably. She had not the least doubt that her duty lay on the side of keeping to her engagement to Gower; for Fred's way of looking at the matter seemed more just to her the more she considered it. Her womanly way of considering it, no doubt, helped her to a more quick and positive decision about it. She asked herself, not only what would Fred and Mr. Gower think of her sudden change of mind, but what would her father think of it, and what would even Hugh himself? To neither of them was she free to explain the meaning and motive of her engagement to Gower; and, without such an explanation, the breaking off of this engagement a week after it had been entered upon, would have seemed to them as silly as it was dishonourable. Possibly even Hugh would not think so fickle and facile a heart worth accepting at second hand. Thus May, after the quenching of this sudden flash of hope, was plunged into even deeper darkness of despair than before.



## FRENCH LITERARY "ANA."

COLLECTIONS of anecdotes, especially those relating to literary and dramatic celebrities, have always been popular in France; and, whether genuine or apocryphal—for, as long as the reader is amused, he is not apt to be particular about trifles—command a ready and extensive sale. Hardly a single individual of any eminence has escaped being the hero of a duodecimo volume published as speedily as possible after his death, and containing whatever specimens of his "table-talk" the compiler may have succeeded in collecting, together with others of more than doubtful origin. Books of this kind are not only pleasant reading, but, when once the wheat is separated from the chaff, have a certain value as supplying characteristic traits and opinions of remarkable persons which are not to be met with elsewhere. Many of these are too hackneyed to admit of reproduction; the following, however, selected from strictly reliable sources, are less generally known, and for the most part appear for the first time in a translated form.

Cardinal Richelieu, who prided himself far more on having written the tragedy of "Mirame," than on his ecclesiastical dignity, and whose especial delight was to be regarded as an enlightened patron of men of letters, remarked one day to Bautru that he had not seen Guez de Balzac for some weeks, and asked if he were ill. "He has a bad cold, your eminence," replied the cynical humorist; "and, considering that he only talks about himself, and takes off his hat as a mark of respect every time he speaks, he is not likely to get rid of it in a hurry."

Some one asked Piron what was the difference between a woman and a looking-glass? "A very material one," was his answer. "A woman speaks without reflecting, whereas a looking-glass reflects without speaking."

Voltaire, annoyed at the plagiarisms of certain Academicians, complained of them to Sedaine. "It is a pity," he said, "that other people are not like you, for you take nothing from any one." "I should be richer if I did," modestly replied Sedaine.

When Jean Baptiste Rousseau had finished his "Ode to Posterity," he showed it to Voltaire. "I very much doubt," said the author of "La Henriade," "if the letter will ever reach its address."

An indifferent poet, speaking of his own verses, remarked to Voltaire that they cost him little trouble. "They cost you exactly what they are worth," was the reply.

"If we were to believe all that those accused of crime have to say in their defence," observed a magistrate to the Abbé Desfontaines (the translator of "Gulliver"), "not one of them would be guilty." "That may be," replied the Abbé, "but if, on the other hand, you were to believe all that their accusers say, it is certain that among those brought before you not one would escape scot-free."

Amyot was asked why he did not write a history of the Kings of France. "I have too much respect for those I serve," he answered, "to attempt to be their biographer."

The celebrated punster, the Marquis de Bièvre, had a cook, who half ruined him by her unlucky habit of breaking every dish she laid hold of. "I call her," he said, "Inez de Casse-trop" (Castro).

An acquaintance of his, who had often served as the butt of his wit, revenged himself on his persecutor in the following way: while driving in a close carriage on the Boulevard, during a heavy shower of rain, he beheld the Marquis making signals to him from the footway. Telling the driver to stop, he inquired what was the matter. "Matter!" exclaimed de Bièvre. "Let me in; I am wet through!" "Well now," coolly answered his friend, "you must excuse me, but I really do not see the point of the joke. Drive on, coachman."

Among the various purchases made by Madame Dubarry, after her installation in the Pavilion of Louveciennes, not the least expensive item was a valuable collection of richly-bound books. This being told to Rivarol, he quietly remarked that she hardly required so many to teach her how to read.

The same humorist, while supping with a party of citizens at Hamburg, did his best to amuse them by a brilliant display of his well-known epigrammatic wit, but soon discovered that, although they all listened to him attentively, they had the greatest difficulty in catching the meaning of what he said. "Just look at these Germans," he whispered to a Frenchman who sat near him; "it takes a dozen of them to understand a joke!"

At the first performance of Beaumarchais' drama, "The Two Friends," a

wag suggested the following addition to the title: "By a man who has none."

Someone asked Madame d'Argenson, the wife of Louis the Fifteenth's Minister, which of the two brothers, Paris du Martel, or Paris du Verney, she liked best. "When I am talking to one of them," she replied, "I prefer the other."

The witty actress, Mademoiselle Quinault, speaking of a lady who, whenever she happened to say anything clever, repeated it to everyone she met, remarked: "That woman never gets hold of a good thing without spoiling it."

When Fouché, the all-powerful minister of police, heard that the dramatist, Andrieux, was in poor circumstances, he offered him the post of censor, which the good-natured author of "Le Manteau" refused, saying that "it might be his destiny to be hung, but he would never consent to officiate as hangman."

A critic found fault with Esménard for borrowing some indifferent verses from Corneille. "They were not worth stealing," said Martainville, the editor of the *Drapeau Blanc*; "Esménard is like an inexperienced thief who picks a rich man's pocket, and, leaving the gold, only takes the copper."

The witty sayings of Sophie Arnould are legion, and have furnished matter for more than one volume of "ana." Many of those attributed to her are of doubtful authenticity; the following, however, are generally allowed to be genuine.

The Marquis de Letorières, immortalised in our own day by Déjazet, was considered the handsomest man of his time. Being smitten with the charms of a fair actress, whose rapacity was equal to her beauty, he presented her with his portrait, first showing it, however, to Sophie.

"You are as handsome as Cupid," said Mademoiselle Arnould, "but your Danaë would rather have the King's picture than yours!"

Sedaine happening to pay her a visit after the failure of one of his pieces, this disaster was alluded to in the course of conversation. The dramatist blamed himself for having chosen an unlucky moment for its production, and concluded by saying, figuratively, that "the pear was not ripe."

"That has not hindered it from falling," replied Sophie.

One day, while walking in the Bois de Boulogne, she met a physician of her acquaintance carrying a gun.

"Which way are you going, you and your gun?" she asked.

"To see a patient at Longchamps," he replied.

"That looks," said Sophie, "as if you were afraid of missing him."

A certain Marquis having received a sound caning, and not appearing disposed to resent the insult:

"How can he allow the matter to rest there?" asked someone.

"Bah!" said Sophie, "don't you see that he has sense enough not to care about what passes behind his back?"

A very pretty woman, but without the slightest pretension to wit, or even common sense, was once complaining of the impertinence of her numerous admirers.

"Nothing is easier," remarked Mademoiselle Arnould, "than to get rid of them altogether; you have only to speak to them."

The Abbé Terray, who was made "contrôleur-général des finances" in 1769, did not scruple to sacrifice the interests of private individuals to those of the State. This procured him many enemies, one of the most violent of whom was Sophie. On the Abbé's appearing in public in the depth of winter, carrying a magnificent muff, she exclaimed:

"What does he want with a muff? His hands are always in our pockets."

Count Louis de Narbonne, a dabbler in poetry, while walking with Talleyrand, began to recite some of his own indifferent verses. The diplomatist endured the inflection for a few minutes without betraying any sign of impatience, but presently, perceiving an individual within hearing who happened to be yawning, he quietly remarked to his companion: "Look yonder, Narbonne, you always speak too loud!"

Someone was wondering at Talleyrand's immense fortune. "There is nothing surprising in it," said the Academician Etienne; "he has sold all those who bought him."

At a soirée given in honour of Bonaparte after his Italian campaign, at which Madame de Staël was present, she criticised pretty freely the different forms of Government, Monarchical and Republican, which had succeeded one another in France. Her discourse elicited repeated marks of approbation; the hero of Lodi, however, remained silent, to her evident disappointment.

"Are you not of my opinion, general?" she inquired.

"Madame," he replied, "I think that

women ought not to meddle with politics."

"In ordinary cases," retorted the author of "Corinne," "you may be right; but in a country where women are exposed to have their heads cut off, it is very natural that they should wish to know the reason why."

Someone happening to observe that Royer-Collard had become very deaf, one of those present asked since when? "Probably," said Madame Ancelot, "since no one has thought it worth while to talk about him."

After the revolution of 1848, Lamartine received so many applications from place-hunters that, being unable to satisfy all, he selected a certain number from the list of candidates, who in due course of time were nominated to the vacant posts. One of these, however, remained unclaimed; and a fortnight later his secretary asked him if he could give him any information respecting "Citizen David, appointed French Consul at Bremen."

"David," said Lamartine, "I do not know him. Let me look at the list." And taking out his pocket-book, he discovered on one of the pages, "David" inscribed in large letters. Suddenly he remembered that a few days before his accession to power, he had written it himself to remind him of a particular passage in the Psalms, and amicably reproached his subordinate for having unconsciously transformed the King of Israel into a Republican Consul. This singular mistake was rectified as follows in the next morning's *Moniteur*: "Citizen X. is appointed Consul of France at Bremen, in lieu of Citizen David, deceased."

The Duke de Morny, one of the most prominent figures at the Court of Napoleon the Third, and a liberal patron of literature and art, was extremely popular in society, a distinction he owed to the singular fascination of his manner, and to a certain reputation for gallantry which, at least as far as the fair sex were concerned, was by no means prejudicial to him. In 1856, before his elevation to the dukedom, he was constantly in the habit of frequenting the house of a banker, whose two sisters-in-law were remarkably attractive; and, one evening, while engaged in conversation with the prettiest of the pair, he was requested by his host to join a party at "lansquenet" in the next room. Annoyed at the interruption, he begged to be excused, saying that he hated play.

"Only for a quarter of an hour," persisted the banker. "We will let you off easily; but positively we can't do without you."

"Well," replied Meray, shrugging his shoulders resignedly, "if I must, I must; but let us get it over as soon as possible," and, following his entertainer into the adjoining room, he declined to take part in the game, but offered to bet on the colour of the first card turned.

"How much do you wish to stake?" inquired the banker.

"Suppose we say ten thousand francs," carelessly suggested the Count.

At the mention of so large a sum the guests looked at each other, and hesitated to cover it; so that their host felt compelled, although somewhat unwillingly, to accept the challenge.

"Which colour do you choose?" he asked.

"Red," said M. de Morny.

The dealer turned up the seven of spades; whereupon the loser, imagining he had done all that was required of him, was on the point of retiring, when his adversary proposed "double or quits."

"As you will," assented the Count. "This time I choose black."

"You have lost again," said the banker, as the ten of hearts came up.

"Very good," coolly remarked M. de Morny. "I conclude you will now leave me in peace for the rest of the evening."

And, sauntering leisurely into the drawing-room, he resumed his conversation with the fair lady as if nothing had happened.

Another characteristic anecdote, dating from the reign of Louis Philippe, is related of him. He had then been recently elected a member of the Chamber of Deputies, and received one day an invitation to dinner from a rich financier of the period, who was fond of ostentatiously displaying his newly acquired wealth and sumptuously appointed table. He had, however, one peculiar weakness, of which those who had partaken of his hospitality were well aware, and which, somehow or other, had come to the ears of M. de Morny. A certain wine in his cellar, a Léoville of exquisite bouquet and flavour, was exclusively reserved for the Amphytrion himself, his wife, and a single guest whom he particularly wished to favour; the others being debarred from a taste of this delicious nectar.

In the course of dinner, the privileged trio having been previously supplied with

the incomparable Léoville, wines of various sorts were handed round; and when it came to the Count's turn, he was asked by the butler if he preferred Château Lafitte or Hermitage?

"Neither," he replied in a distinctly audible tone. "Give me some Léoville."

The dismayed attendant glanced at his master, who, putting a good face on the matter, directed him to hand "M. le Comte" the wine he preferred; whereupon M. de Morry, negligently emptying the precious liquid from the claret glass into a tumbler, filled the latter with water, and drank it off; then, turning towards his neighbour, continued his conversation with him as unconcernedly as if nothing had occurred to interrupt it. Whether the parvenu profited by the lesson so pointedly administered to him, and dispensed his Léoville more equitably in future, is not recorded.

At a literary dinner, one of the guests had set the company in a roar by relating a droll story of an impecunious individual who had ingeniously contrived to borrow money from a creditor on questionable security. Dumas the younger, who was present, positively screamed with delight.

"Are you aware," whispered his neighbour at table, "that the person alluded to is your father?"

"My father!" retorted the author of the "Demi-monde." "Impossible! Do you suppose for a moment, if he had been the hero of the adventure, that he would have missed the opportunity of chronicling it in his 'Memoirs'?"

### SAXON CHURCHES.

NO ONE is more unpatriotic than your theorist. If facts refuse to agree with his fancies, so much the worse for them. He will undermine and batter with anything that comes to hand, and will never rest until he has brought them down.

A generation ago the architects all set their faces against "Saxon" art. Their grandfathers had given the name to three-fifths of the round-headed doors and windows in our village churches. Then came a reaction; "the Saxon," coming from a stoneless country, was supposed to have stuck to his habit of building what he did build in wood, until it seemed as if the wooden church of Greenstead, in Essex, was the only thing that remained to us from pre-Norman days.

It was a time of destructive criticism; Niebuhr had lately been knocking the bottom out of old Roman history, teaching that Romulus, and Remus, and Tarquin and the tall poppies, and Mucius Scævola, and the rest are myths; and so the architects, forgetting their Bede, who writes that in the seventh century Benedict Biscop built, with Gaulish masons, stone churches at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, and that Bishop Wilfrid did the same at Hexham and York and Ripon, and forgetting, too, that their example could not fail to be followed elsewhere, at any rate till the Danes began their ravages, roundly asserted that Saxon architecture is a myth, that even such towns as Barnack and Earl's Barton were built after the Conquest, or, at least, after Norman influence came in like a flood under that half-Norman, Edward the Confessor.

They had not studied their Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, or they would have seen, in the illuminations, churches and towers evidently of stone; but stranger than the want of research was the want of patriotism. One can understand Mr. Parker and his school vehemently insisting that the Irish round towers, since they are certainly older than the English invasion, must be pre-Irish and pre-historic, raised by Cuthites, Arkites, or other mythical builders, because "Pat," being a mere savage, could never have had the skill to build them. That is natural; Mr. Parker was not an Irishman, and "Pat" is always fair game; but why treat our Saxon forefathers in the same unhandsome way?

Well, now the pendulums, both historical and architectural, are swinging the other way. Niebuhr is at a discount. We do not accept all about the kings of Rome just as Livy tells it; a good many of us would draw the line at the wolf, for instance, or at Father Mars; but we by no means throw it all overboard.

And so with churches; we do not say, as they did when Horace Walpole began to make Gothic architecture fashionable, that every round arch which is not after the symmetrical pattern of those in so many of our cathedrals is "Saxon;" but we do say that up and down England there is a deal of pre-Norman building still remaining.

Sir Gilbert Scott—"Lectures on Mediæval Architecture," ii. 35—sounded the note of the reaction. "They are clearly not Norman," he says, "for, with the single exception that their arches are round, they



have nothing in common with the specimens of that style erected in and after the Conqueror's reign."

There are other round-arched styles besides the Norman—the Rhenish, for instance, the North Italian, the Aquitanian, all varieties of the Romanesque, that is, Roman altered to meet the requirements of Christian building—and there is in these islands a Saxon-Romanesque, and an Irish or Scotie ditto, besides that which should, in strictness, be called Norman-Romanesque.

Now, of pre-Norman Romanesque, the finest remains are in the North, the part Christianised not by Saint Augustine's followers, who never gained a hold on any of the country north of London, but by Scotie (Irish) missionaries, such as Aidan, Colman, Begogh (Saint Bee), etc. These men had been used to stone buildings in their own land, and doubtless they would bring the art in with them; and the likeness between the sculptures on North of England and on early Irish buildings is so marked as to warrant the belief that the same architects erected both. Compare, for instance, the font at Cotham in Yorkshire, with the carvings at Kells or at Kilcullen, co. Kildare; and the cross at Winwick in Lancashire with the Irish crosses—among the carvings on this Lancashire cross is a square bell of the Scotie type—and the carvings at Adel in Yorkshire, quaint beasts "all made out of the carver's brain," full of individuality, yet closely akin in spirit to the strange animals on the Scotie sculptured stones. On Kirkburn font, in Yorkshire, there is a bit of Scotie interlaced work, roughly done, sandwiched between the rest of the much plainer and easier bordering, as if the Scotie master carver had begun it and his Saxon apprentices had been unable to finish in his style. On the font in Walton-on-the-Hill, near Liverpool, the Flight into Egypt, sadly weather-worn, is not unlike the same subject on the font of Clonard Abbey; on Kirkby font, near Liverpool, the carvings are very Scotie, Adam and Eve, with the serpent, being exactly like the figures found on so many Irish high crosses. At Kirkby Stephen, Westmoreland, there is an Irish cross, on which the devil is bound in Scotie knots with what the old Irish stories call "the three smalls" (wrists, and ankles, and small of the back).

In the undoubtedly early Norman, of which the chapel in the Tower of London is a type, sculpture is as rare as it

is profuse in the pre-Norman Irish; and, as it abounds in the little north-country churches, of which I have named a few, the inference is that they, since they are certainly not late Norman, are pre-Norman, and that the spirit which guided and inspired their decorators was Scotie. Of course the Saxon, in his own Germany, had never built with stone; his churches, had he followed his instincts, would have been like those of the Norwegians nowadays, with less elaborate carving; but his Scotie missionaries taught him to rear stone buildings, and he soon became such an adept in the work that, not only in the North, where Scotie influence was predominant, but more or less all over England some of his work still remains. Often, where the rest of the Saxon church was pulled down and modernised, the tympanum (half-circle between the lintel and door-arch) is preserved; often, as at Saint Nicholas, Ipswich, slabs carved in the flat Saxon style are found let into a much later wall. Churches, which are in the main, and not merely in a few of their carvings, "Saxon," are not many. A few of the most notable are: Brixworth, Northampton, in which county there are several Saxon towers, as Barnack, Earl's Barton, etc.; Whittingham, and Hexham, Northumberland; Kirkdale, Yorkshire (where is the bone-cave, beloved of geologists); Jarrow, and Monk's Wearmouth, Durham; a great number in Lincolnshire, Heapham near Gainsborough, and Scartho near Grimsby, and Stow near Lincoln, the old Sidnaceaster, amongst them; in Norfolk, Great Dunham and Newton, both near Swaffham; in Gloucester, Deerhurst and Daglingworth, and others; Boarhunt, close to Fareham, and Corhampton, near Bishop's Waltham, in Hants; Sompting, in Sussex; Kingsbury, in Middlesex, between Harrow and Hendon; in Essex, Trinity Church, Colchester (curious because it is chiefly of Roman brick), and Felstead; Cambridge, St. Benet's; Kent, the ruined church in Dover Castle. There are many more; but everyone who means to "do" a county, will of course read up in "Murray," or some such guide. And there are worse ways of spending a holiday than exploring the churches of a district. Here and there you come upon a group of architectural gems—as in parts of Northampton, South Lincoln, and the Lynn Marshland. But an enthusiast will not pass over an insignificant-looking church; even if it is not mentioned in "Murray" it may have interesting features. A

cyclist can easily, too, carry heel-ball and lining-paper, so as to take rubbings of any brasses; though these, being luxuries imported from the Continent, are rare beyond the eastern and south-eastern counties. I cannot imagine a more acceptable present to an Australian or New Zealand museum than a set of good rubbings of church-brasses. Put some turmeric or chrome yellow with your heel-ball and the effect will be improved, and the youth of Greater England will be able to see what sort of monuments well-to-do English folks set up in the fourteenth and two following centuries.

Of Saxon building, the chief peculiarities are what is called long and short work—seen especially at the angles of the towers, where it bonds the rubble walls together more neatly than a buttress; in the small windows a dividing baluster, with a flat stone (abacus) at top and bottom; often in small doors and windows a triangular instead of a round head. Once noted, these features are sure never to be forgotten. The sculpture, when there is any, often is (as I have said) *Scotic*, i.e. Irish, in character; and *Scotic* art is called by one of the latest and best writers on the subject (Mr. Romilly Allen, "Early Christian Symbolism"), "Byzantine intensely Celticised." In judging of a sculpture, if there is no date and no record, the best way is to "come to the book." Everybody has seen reproductions of some of the Irish illuminated manuscripts—the finest in the Western world, at any rate; if your sculpture at all resembles them in detail, you may conclude that it was wrought by Anglo-Saxon workmen educated by some of the *Scotic* missionaries who did all that had been done to Christianise England north of Thames, and who, as their reward, were rejected in favour of Wilfrid and his Roman monks by the ungrateful Oswiu, because, as "Peter had the keys," he thought it was best to keep on good terms with Peter's friends. Even when the rest of the church is of later date, a Saxon doorway or the moulding of a window is often preserved; and when you see a projecting moulding carried round the whole outside of a door or window, like a frame, you know that it is Saxon work.

Another peculiarity is a very narrow chancel arch; at St. Lawrence, Bradford-on-Avon, one of the most perfect of our undoubted Saxon churches, it is only three feet five inches wide. This church may be the very one which Aldhelm built early in the eighth century. It is only

within the last few years that it has been cleared of rubbish and plaster—"restored," not in the too-frequent sense of being rendered unrecognisable with brand-new work replacing the old. It contains, on each side of the chancel arch, an angel in the bas-relief manner spoken of above. They have the lanky limbs and long fluttering drapery which are so universal in the figures in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.

Daglingworth, too, three miles from Cirencester, where there was a Roman station, of which other remains have been found besides a fine tessellated pavement, and where the shelly limestone takes a better polish than Devonshire marble, has a distinctly Saxon church—"long and short work" at all the angles, a window made out of a Roman inscribed stone, the sundial over the south door as unmistakeably Saxon as that at Kirkdale, and two very curious sculptures by the narrow chancel arch: Christ in glory, and St. Peter with the peculiar "Saxon" key figured in St. Ethelwold's "Benedictional" (about A.D. 975) in the Duke of Devonshire's library. Both figures have a kind of puzzle girdle, the straps passing through a ring.

Sompting, close to Shoreham, has a Saxon tower, fully one hundred feet high to the point of the low slated spire, which grows out of four very pointed gables. The door in this tower has very un-Norman capitals to its pillar and pilasters; some of the windows are triangle-headed, others divided by the ribs or pilasters which run from the base to the top of the gables, and on which are repeated the capitals of the west door.

Deerhurst, close to Tewkesbury, had a royal palace, which, in 715, was made into a monastery. This was destroyed by the Danes; but Duke Odda rebuilt it in Edward the Confessor's time, and his dedication stone, dated 1053, was dug up amid the ruins of the chancel—destroyed in the Civil War—and is now with the Arundel marbles at Oxford. Here, too, the tower is very high, and has apparently been capped like Sompting. The masonry is even rougher than most Saxon work—such a contrast to the beautifully-jointed ashlar of the Irish round towers—wide-jointed "rag-work" with some Roman tiles built in in herring-bone fashion. Over most of the doorways are rude sculptures. What was the chancel arch—now the east wall, the chancel being down—has a dripstone ornamented with grotesque animals. The font has an interlaced moulding like the

mouldings on the Scotch crosses. The double window in the east of the tower is not Scotch, nor Norman, but evidently imitation Roman; as if a priest, who had been to Rome, had drawn the design, and the clumsy workman had striven to carry it out.

If you are ever at Ludlow—of which both church and castle are well worth seeing, the latter having inside its precincts a perfect little “round” church, like a miniature Temple Church—you should walk out to Stanton Lacy. Here, though triplets of Early English lancets have been knocked out in the transepts, the rest of the church is Saxon, and the “long and short” pilaster strips up the wall have a most curious effect.

In York city, the tower of St. Mary Bishop-hill Junior is nearly all Roman brick, herring-boned, and the balusters of its windows are just like wooden props stuck in under a flat stone.

Even St. Michael's Tower, Oxford, is edged with “long and short work,” and has balusters in its windows, though poor compared with those of St. Benet's, in the sister university, which, in turn, are less ornate than those in the richest of all our Saxon towers—Earl's Barton, near Daventry.

Mr. Romilly Allen thinks that much of our Saxon work is older than A.D. 1000, though Cnut began his reign (1017) by a general church and abbey restoration, and built a specially grand church, we are told, at Ashenden, near Aylesbury. There had been a lull a little before his time, owing to the strong belief that the world was to come to an end now that Christ's reign of a thousand years was ended. How such a notion grew up it is hard to conceive. A Thuringian hermit started it, and, as it spread, it gained strength, till, in parts of France, they neglected to sow their corn.

To sum up, then, there is a good deal of unquestionably “Saxon” work up and down the country, especially in church towers; and there is a good deal more of probably “Saxon” carving built into the walls of later churches, and this, in the North of England especially, often bears such a markedly Scotch stamp as to make us think that the sculptors were working under the eyes of Irish missionaries.

Derbyshire is specially rich in such carvings. At Parwich, near Ashbourn (where was a Roman camp), the doortympanum is very Scotch; so it is at Hognaston, near Wirksworth. Both represent the Agnus Dei with nimbed cross

(“flag” it becomes in later art), held by its right fore hoof, while around are strange creatures of all kinds—serpents, ravens, wild boars, hyenas, panthers; the idea being that over all these, each of which typifies some evil passion, the Lamb has power. At Hognaston, a man, sore beset by the ravening beasts, is taking refuge with the Lamb.

At Ilam, close to Ashbourn, the font is sculptured in the same style; and in one compartment the Lamb, on whose cross is perched the Dove, is looking towards a gruesome beast and causing it to disgorge the man whom it has swallowed. Sometimes, as at Hoveringham, Notts, an archer—in this case a centaur, typical of some evil principle—is shooting at the Lamb.\* At Ault Hucknall, near Mansfield, the sculptor's fancy has taken even more than Scotch range. In the lower compartment of the tympanum a fearful winged dragon is rushing at the cross, which seems as if it had risen from the earth to protect a knight who, with shield, and hauberk, and heavy sword, stands on the far side of it, awaiting the monster. Above are two strange creatures: a centaur with nimbus round his head, palm-branch in his right, and cross-topped staff in his left hand, and moving as if to attack him, a strange huge beast—which, had it a human head, might be the man-eating “manticora”—followed by a little dog.

Among early beasts in manuscripts, we must remember that tiger means a serpent (sometimes winged). The way in which hunters rob it of its young is to place mirrors in the track by which it will return to its den. When it sees its beauty in the glass, it is so charmed that it remains rooted to the spot, till its young are carried far away out of reach. Here the symbolism is to teach that we are like tigers in whose path the devil places temptations of all kinds, which when we gaze at we forget our souls. One creature, the phoenix—a type of the resurrection—gave rise to a curious mistake; the word also means palm-tree, and the verse in the ninety-second Psalm is in mediæval works rendered “the righteous shall flourish as a phoenix.”

Scotch-looking, probably Saxon carvings, are not unknown in the southern counties.

\* The Sagittarius (archer) is of doubtful symbolism. Sometimes, in contest with “the savage man,” it typifies the soul warring with the body; sometimes, when centaur, it symbolises Mr. Facing-both-ways—the being whose two natures both assert themselves.

At Melbury Bubb, in Dorset, on the font, is a fine example. Among many other beasts are the crocodile and the serpent, the latter forming an interlaced bordering. This is a symbol of the resurrection; according to the story the crocodile lies asleep in the mud with his mouth open, in crawls the serpent, and forthwith bursts asunder the entrails of the beast and comes forth alive.

Going back to Derbyshire, at Ashford in the water, where the fine black marble is quarried, over the door is the tree of life, typifying God the Father, the shadow being the Son, the fruit the Holy Ghost. This is being attacked on one side by a boar, on the other by a lion.

Enough of Saxon, and presumably Saxon sculptures. The sculptured crosses, like those at Hackness, near Whitby, and at Collingham, near Weatherby, Yorkshire, and Bewcastle, on the Cumberland edge of Northumberland, and the sculptured stones like those at Penrith, are still more Scotie in their details than fonts and tympana. They are like the high crosses of which so many still remain in Ireland. And if you cross the border into Wales or Scotland, or sail over to the Isle of Man, you will have any number of sculptured stones with knot-work and interlaced work, and all the marks of what, in the Middle Ages, was called the "opus Scoticum."

One of the most beautiful examples is a stone coffin, dug up a few years ago at Govan near Glasgow. The whole of this, sides and top, except the panels filled with figures of animals, is covered with the most elaborate interlaced work. It is, as Mr. R. Allen says, a shame that casts of such monuments are not to be found at South Kensington. We have Japanese pots, spider-legged furniture, della robbia, and half-a-dozen other kinds of pottery; we have all the curios which could be picked up in Persia, heaped together in a sort of colossal Storr and Mortimer's; and of pre-Norman art in these islands the only samples in the Museum are the crosses at Kirk Braddon in Man, at Irton, and at Gosforth in Cumberland, and these are in a corner of a room filled with the most miscellaneous collection ever brought together.

It is a disgrace that, amid all our art museums, we have not a museum of Christian Archæology. Besides its other uses, it would stimulate research. The home tourist would work with double zest at his old churches, if he knew that a national "department" would welcome

a drawing or photograph of any new bit of Saxon work which he might come across.

As for crosses, the finest are in Ireland. There will be a rush of tourists over there this year; and they had better take with them some little knowledge of Irish art; for while so much political gas is being given off, they are not likely to learn much of that kind of thing in the country itself. Monasterboice, and Kells, and Moone Abbey—but any good guide-book will give a list. Study it now; it is such a nuisance to find out after that you were close to some fine thing, and did not know of its existence. Only do let everyone who can, see the very curious carvings on the crosses at Castledermot in Kildare, not far from Carlow. And if you can give time in Dublin to study one of the Irish manuscripts, you will notice how the illuminations and the contemporary stone-work illustrate one another.

There are plenty of other English crosses besides the three named above, and among them, those at Aycliffe in Durham, at Alnmouth in Northumberland, and at Bradbourne in Derbyshire, near Wirksworth, have what Mr. Allen calls "Hiberno-Saxon forms of ornament"; the work, as I said before, of English hands guided by Scotie minds.

## ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

### WHITSUNTIDE.

WHITSUNTIDE is generally believed to be a corruption of "White-Sunday," a name given to this day as one of the great baptismal seasons of the year in the past, when all admitted to the rite appeared in white garments, as emblematic of the purity of heart which baptism is supposed to work, and also to commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost. Some there are, however, who hold that the name is a corruption of the French "huit" (eight), because Whit-Sunday is the eighth Sunday after Easter.

The day corresponds to the Jewish feast of Pentecost, instituted in the wilderness in commemoration of the giving of the law from Mount Sinai.

Whitsuntide has always been regarded as a particularly holy season by the Catholic Church, and it is still so observed amongst Protestants. In the Church of Rome, high mass is celebrated with all the splendour which that Church loves to infuse into its services on great occasions.



Our forefathers as much as, perhaps more than, ourselves were holiday-makers on Whit-Monday and Tuesday, and appear to have indulged in all kinds of exercises and amusements, for which, in many parishes, a stimulus was provided, and out of which the Church claimed a due share of the profits.

A place, termed the Church house, was set apart, and a quantity of ale, termed Whitsun or Church ale, was brewed, and sold to the parishioners who came to the feast. The profits thus accruing were applied to the necessary repairs of the church, and sometimes, when no repairs were needed, to charitable and other purposes.

Drink, however, in those days was not what goes by that name now; it was pure, and not a skilful decoction of mystery and colouring fluids.

Gambling, as it was called, consisted of quoits, archery, nine-pins, and such-like amusements, dignified now by the name of sports. It is somewhat significant that, as in everything else to promote the good of the working classes, the Church always took the lead in the "good old days" as organisers of amusements for the benefit of the body corporeal.

In Douce's time, some century and a quarter ago, a Whitsun ale was thus conducted:

"Two persons are chosen previously to the meeting, to be lord and lady of the ale, who dress as suitably as they can to the characters they assume. A large empty barn, or some such building is provided for the lord's hall, and fitted up with seats to accommodate the company. Here they assemble to dance and regale in the best manner their circumstances and the place will afford; and each young fellow treats his girl to a riband or favour. The lord and lady honour the hall with their presence, attended by the steward, sword-bearer, purse-bearer, and mace-bearer, with their several badges or ensigns of office. They have likewise a train-bearer or page, and a fool or jester, dressed in a party-coloured jacket, whose ribaldry or gesticulation contribute not a little to the entertainment of some part of the company."

In the Brentford accounts for the Whitsuntide ale, 1624, the gains are thus set forth: "Imprimis, cleared by pigeonholes, £4 19s.; ditto hocking, £7 3s. 7d.; ditto rifeling, £2; victualling, £8 0s. 2d.; total £22 2s. 9d."

It will thus be seen that it was rather a profitable affair.

In the time of William the Conqueror, Whitsuntide was celebrated with various sports and tournaments, which were partly superseded in the time of Edward the First, by the introduction of the miracle plays or mysteries, which in that age were of service in making the people better acquainted with the leading events of sacred history. The Puritans tried in vain to check the excesses to which the sports had given way, but the custom gradually decayed of its own accord, and the more modern village festivals and club-meetings took their place. Notwithstanding its decay, we may yet trace back the Friendly Society gatherings, preceded with a service in the Parish Church, to the Whitsun ales and miracle plays, and further still to the love-feasts of the primitive Christians.

In Poor Robin's Almanack for 1676, "Stool Ball," and "Barley Break," are referred to as Whitsun sports. The same authority also says that,

At Islington a fair they hold.  
Where ales and cakes are to be sold;  
At Highgate and at Holloway  
The like is kept there every day;  
At Tot'nam Court and Kentish Town,  
And all those places up and down.

Drayton also says:

In his gay baldric, at his low grassy board,  
With flowers, clouted cream, and country dainties  
stored,  
And whilst the bagpipe plays, each lusty jocund  
swain  
Quaffs syllabus in cans.

Ben Jonson tells us that

The rout of rural folk come thronging in,  
(Their rudeness then is thought no sin)  
The jolly wassail walks the often round,  
And in their cups their cares are drowned.

This refers to the feasting and general hospitality, such conspicuous traits of our great-grandfathers on holy-days, when the Squire and the farmer threw open their doors, and bade everyone welcome.

The festival of Whitsuntide is by no means peculiar to England; the southern Slavs keep their "Slawa" feast during Whitsun week. This commences on the Monday or Tuesday, and lasts for three days. There are two distinct ceremonials, the religious, and the social; the former consisting of the breaking of the cake, and the latter the drinking of the toasts. The "Slawa" is to all intents and purposes the household god, and once the blessing of the Church has been secured, the festival is spent in open-handed hospitality.

On Whit-Tuesday, 1786, there was celebrated at Hendon, Middlesex, a burlesque imitation of the Olympic games. One prize was a gold-laced hat, to be grinned for by six candidates, who were placed on a platform, with horse-collars to exhibit through. Over their heads was printed:

Detur Tetrici;  
or  
The ugliest grinner  
Shall be the winner.

Each party grinned separately for three minutes, and then all united in one grand exhibition of facial contortion. An objection was lodged against the winner on the ground that he had rinsed his mouth with vinegar.

A similar performance was gone through at Stratford-on-Avon in recent years; but no adults were found foolish enough to make displays of themselves before an assembled multitude, and lads had the honour of competing for the prizes.

At Whitsuntide, for centuries, mystery plays were performed at Chester, the first, on the Passion of Our Lord, being written by Gregory of Nazianzen and a German nun named Roswitha, who lived in the tenth century, and wrote six Latin dramas on the stories of saints and martyrs. These plays were usually performed in churches, but more frequently in the open air and other convenient places. They were extremely popular, and though the mixture of sacred and profane was truly shocking, yet the people were taught by them scenes from the life of our Saviour which would otherwise have been sealed books. The first appearance of mystery plays at Chester was Whitsuntide, 1268, and the various guilds took each their respective part in the representation. Some idea may be gathered of the dialogue from the Ober-Ammergau plays elsewhere mentioned. When the Passion Play ceased, pageants followed, after the style of that at Coventry.

The celebrated Greenwich Fair was formerly held on Whit-Monday, and was continued until the disorder that followed became so great that the authorities were compelled to put an end to the custom.

Whitsuntide, in Scotland, was one of the usual terms for regulating the letting of houses and farms. It was formerly moveable, but was fixed by statute in 1690 to mean May the fifteenth. In many respects, however, local usage overrides the statute. Thus, in Edinburgh, the term of entry in a house is the twenty-fifth of May.

The dove being an emblem of the Holy Ghost, there was, in the "days long ago," a figure of a dove suspended by a cord from the ceiling so as to alight on the high altar during service on Whit-Sunday. In others, figures of cloven tongues or red rose-leaves were similarly introduced. The latter practice is still retained at Messina; but generally these scenical representations have been discontinued.

In some parts of the East, as well as the West, the practice prevails of decorating churches with evergreens and flowers, as is done in this country at Christmas.

In the reign of Richard the First, according to the old romance of "Sir Beuys of Hampton," knights rode at Whitsuntide on steeds and palfreys over a three-mile course for "forty pounds of ready gold." From this it may be inferred that racing was a recognised pastime at that early period of English history.

Rudder, in his "History of Gloucestershire," relates that in the neighbourhood of St. Briscols, formerly, after divine service on Whit-Sunday, pieces of bread and cheese were distributed to the congregation at church. To defray the expense of this, every householder in the parish paid a penny to the churchwardens, which was said to be for the liberty of cutting and taking wood in Hadnalls. Tradition affirms that this privilege was obtained of some Earl of Hereford, then lord of the Forest of Dean, at the instance of his lady, upon the same hard terms as those upon which Lady Godiva obtained relief for the citizens of Coventry.

In the town of Hinkley, Leicestershire, there was formerly held at Whitsuntide a fair known as the "Millers' Fair," so called from the fact that all the millers from the adjoining villages assembled and formed a grand procession, headed by one whom they termed the "King of the millers."

In mediæval Western Europe, Whitsuntide was a period of great festivity, and was considered a season of more importance than can be easily explained by the incidents connected with it recorded in the Gospel, or by any later Christian legends attached to it. It was one of the great festivals of kings and chieftains in the romances of the Middle Ages. It was that especially on which King Arthur is represented as holding his most splendid court. The sixth chapter of the "Morte d'Arthur" of Sir Thomas Malory tells us how "Then King Arthur removed into

Wales, and let crie a great feast, that it should be holden at Pentecost, after the coronation of him at the city of Carleon (Chester)," and later on, "So King Arthur had ever a custom that at the high feast of Pentecost especially, afore al other high feasts in the yeare, he would not goe that day to meat until he had heard or seene some great adventure or mervaille."

At the present time hiring fairs are held in the South of Scotland and North of England at this period of the year, but these are, for the most part, confined to farm servants. In some districts the servants stand in a row at certain parts of the street, ready to treat with proposing employers. These hirings, however, are now not so much used, both masters and servants finding it more convenient to make their engagements in a better manner.

Whitsuntide customs, with their vices and their virtues, are fast dying out, and in the place of morris-dancing and mystery plays, we have Sunday School feasts, and excursion trains which start at some abnormal hour from any part of England to remote seaside resorts, or to great centres of population where the "sights" are numerous. The least excuse now is sufficient to send the ordinary citizen off upon his travels; and, all things considered, it will, I am sure, be admitted that this is the best way of spending at least this great holiday of the Church.

## RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

*Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.*

### PART II.

#### CHAPTER I. THE HERO'S RETURN.

IN the old city of Woolsborough, there was nothing to mark the lapse of more than four years. Day by day, Dr. Chanter's organ and the Cathedral choir sent up their music to the lofty stone roof, possibly higher still. Week by week, crowds came on Sunday evening to listen to their favourite preachers, as Paul and Celia did once, and perhaps some of them altered their lives a little in consequence. Sometimes, at sunset, the great west window was illumined, as Paul had seen it when he came back from that walk of his. Down in the back streets leading to the river, which flowed on under its bridges as

usual, men and women lounged about and sat on their begrimed doorsteps, and would as soon have thought of climbing up into heaven on a rainbow, as of going up the hill and across the Close to the great church whose bells shook the air all round them, and where their forerunners certainly worshipped four hundred years ago.

Canon and Mrs. Percival still lived at River Gate. They spent most of the year there now, having given up their little house at Holm. The Canon was beginning to be a little restless, and secretly to think himself overlooked by Bishops and Government; but in appearance he was unchanged. Mrs. Percival had gone through a good deal of worry, and there were a few more lines in her face; but she had found peace and comfort in doing up her drawing-room, which now was really beautiful; in it, Colonel Ward's old china and French enamels had at last found a sphere where they could shine.

And now Vincent had come home from India, and his mother had welcomed him with real, heartfelt joy. On a lovely April afternoon, while the sun was shining peacefully over the terraces, bright with spring flowers, and the Cathedral bells in a soft dreamy cadence were chiming for service, she was strolling up and down with her hand in Vincent's arm, and they were talking of things which had happened since he went away. Vincent, who had arrived the night before, was really glad to see his mother again. He was pleased at the loving welcome she gave him; he had been roughing it a good deal of late years, had been through a small war with some frontier tribes, where he had been slightly wounded, and could now, with her at least, be a hero to his heart's content. He was a thin, yellow, sunburnt, fierce-looking man; he looked, in fact, even more positively ill-tempered than when he went out, four years and a half ago; but in this case, perhaps, appearances were deceitful; his mother had not heard him say a cross word yet, and thought he had come home charming.

Of course they soon began to talk of Celia, a rather painfully interesting subject to them both.

"She certainly was the making of the place, that summer," Vincent said, as his eyes wandered over the garden where Celia used to walk. "How confoundedly pretty she was, the little witch! I couldn't get her out of my head for a long time. Is she as pretty now?"

"I suppose so," said Mrs. Percival. "I

believe she is very well, and happy, and all that. You know I have only seen her once since her marriage, and that was in Paris, two years ago. She has asked us to go down and see them, but I really didn't much care about it, and your father quite disliked the idea. He was so shocked at her turning Roman Catholic."

"Well, the best thing she could do, as she married one," said Vincent. "I suppose he and his people insisted on it."

"Not exactly, but it smoothed over difficulties. Last year there was some talk of their coming to stay with the Lefroys, which would have been very awkward for us. I was glad it was given up."

"Nonsense! Who would think it awkward? Nobody but my father. I wish they would come this year. I should like to see Celia again."

"I don't care very much to see her," said Mrs. Percival sadly.

"Why, my dear old woman, she has done you no harm. As for her breaking off with that ass, Romaine, it was quite right; she never could have cared for him. Besides, I understood you to say that they quarrelled, and it was as much his doing as hers."

"I never could quite make out the history of that affair," said Mrs. Percival.

"Paul was devoted to her. I feel convinced she must have done something that cut him up terribly, though she never would allow it to me. Something was wrong, just at the time of dear old Colonel Ward's death. But Celia would never have broken off with Paul if that money had not been left her. That, of course, made everything easy. She was ready to find out, then, that she and Paul could never get on together."

"I say she was right."

"She was heartless and ungrateful, Vincent. Well, I soon began to see what would happen. She had taken a violent fancy to these French people; and as soon as she knew of her fortune, and had broken off her engagement, which she did instantly, she absolutely threw herself into their arms. Nothing was ever settled in such a frightful hurry. I think even M. de Montmirail was almost ashamed, having only made our acquaintance through poor Paul, but he was desperately in love with Celia; so was his daughter, and so was his mother-in-law, Madame de Ferrand. She came to talk to me about it. Of course, Celia was perfectly independent. I could not influence her one way or the

other, and she made up her mind at once. She declared," said Mrs. Percival, laughing a little, "that she was in love for the first time in her life. I did not quite believe her; I think it was partly pique, and partly excitement, and the fun of doing anything so unusual! M. de Montmirail was very good-looking, too, and just as much her slave as Paul, only in a more amusing sort of way. Celia and I had laughed about his admiration for her before I ever dreamed of her marrying him. I knew about the money, though, before she did. Colonel Ward told me as a secret; she was to know on her wedding-day."

"I wonder the Colonel left it to her absolutely," said Vincent. "I wonder he didn't make her marrying Paul Romaine a condition; that was weak, Paul being such a favourite of his. He never meant to send his money to France, poor old chap."

"Ah! that was Paul's doing," said Mrs. Percival.

"How do you mean?"

"Dr. Graves, the Colonel's doctor, you know, told your father something about it when he was last at Holm. I think the lawyer who made the will had told him, when everybody was so surprised at Paul's engagement being broken off suddenly, and all the preparations stopped, poor boy! It seems that the Colonel told Paul what he was going to do, and asked him whether the legacy to Celia should be conditional. And he said 'certainly not.' If he had said 'yes,' no doubt everything would have come to him. The lawyer and Dr. Graves were both sure that that was the Colonel's intention."

"Of course, Romaine never imagined a slip was possible," said Vincent. "Just the sort of fellow to go blundering on with his eyes shut."

"Oh, I don't know," said Mrs. Percival. "There was a shadow, even then. There was something wrong; he was not happy about Celia. Directly after the Colonel died, he rushed over to Paris, and they had rather a scene, I know, though Celia made light of it to me. In that affair of the will, I believe Paul behaved very generously."

"Behaved like a muff, I should say," said Vincent. "And what became of him? Where is the poor forsaken youth now?"

"I really don't know. He went off to America as soon as he could, and I think he has been all over the world. I



have never seen him since. As for Holm and the old house, it really is too sad and desolate now. It was all left unfinished, and has been standing empty ever since. The old servants look after it, and the agent sees to the estate, and the woods, and so on. Colonel Ward's dogs live there; his cottage is never even let in the summer; ours is sometimes. I wish Paul would write to me, for certainly the crash was no fault of mine. I was very sorry. I always liked him so much."

"I wonder what it was that they quarrelled about," said Vincent, after a minute or two. "I wonder if it can have been about a letter of mine to Celia, to which she sent me a very cold answer, the day after Colonel Ward died. In that letter there were certainly no signs of her breaking off with Romaine. Therefore I was startled when I heard of all the changes so soon after."

"What was your letter about?" said Mrs. Percival. "I heard nothing of it, I think."

"Not likely that you would. I suggested to Celia that she might as well throw him over before it was too late, and marry me. I deceived myself into an idea that she liked me. But that niece of yours is a desperate flirt."

"I think she is. But that was very wrong of you, Vincent. However, I don't see how Paul could possibly have known of that; she would never have told him."

"No; I don't suppose she would," said Captain Percival, taking no notice of his mother's gentle blame.

"I often thought of your fancy for Celia, which vexed me so much at the time," she went on. "When I heard that she was to have all that money, my first thought was of you—how it might have taken away all difficulties."

"Yes, it was hardly fair that a Frenchman should have carried off my luck," said Vincent. "But I suppose she liked him best. Queer girl! Well, she broke Romaine's heart, perhaps, but not mine. I have lived very comfortably without her."

"Everything is for the best, I dare say," said Mrs. Percival peacefully. "When Celia lived with me, in spite of her pretty face and pleasant ways, I never was quite sure about her. She was selfish, like her poor father; she had very little real feeling. She liked to be liked; but, beyond that, I don't think

she cared much about making other people happy. Well, my dear, we have talked about her enough. Now let me hear something about yourself."

This was a subject on which Vincent was always ready to enlarge. He had a fine stock of grievances, which were generally sent home by post; but they naturally wanted talking over. To-day, however, he was less self-occupied than usual, and the subject of Celia seemed to linger in his mind. After some time, when his mother suggested going in to tea, he delayed her to ask a few more questions.

"You hear from the young woman sometimes, I suppose? What sort of life does she lead? Is she in Paris a good deal?"

"Only for a few weeks in the year. At first they were there very often, when Madame de Ferrand was alive, and they went to stay with her. But she died two years ago; and now they live chiefly down at the old Château in the country, where they have plenty of neighbours, and have been very busy restoring the house—with Celia's money. M. de Montmirail is very fond of the place, and very popular there; he manages a lot of public business. His daughter is growing up; she must be seventeen or eighteen now."

"Does Celia find her a bore?"

"No, I think not; she always speaks of her kindly. The girl is very fond of her, I believe."

"I should rather like to see that household. Madame la Marquise! What a joke!" said Vincent, as he followed his mother in at the drawing-room window.

## CHAPTER II. MADAME DE MONTMIRAIL

It was a bright May morning in France; one of those days which the people there call "*jours de cristal*," so clear and transparent is the air. The world lay in brilliant sunshine and black shadow; the trees were motionless, only now and then a gentle breath brought wafts of scent from the acacia and pink may. All shades of tender green, and brown, and gold, were painted as the pre-Raphaelites saw them, on a clear hard background of blue, dazzling sky. Old Pierre was already going round to shut the shutters, and let down the sun-blinds outside the salon windows, for Madame la Marquise could not endure rooms flooded with light. Monsieur le Marquis, who was of a different opinion, and sometimes threatened—though he

never carried out his threat — to pull shutters open and blinds up in the full glare of midday, had just driven off in his dog-cart to the station, so that Pierre could work his will unrestrained. Pierre was not particularly fond of his English mistress, who, finding herself absolute ruler, had not thought much about being popular with the old servants. In fact, she had imported a household of new ones, only keeping Pierre and Suzanne because it seemed impossible to send them away, and Suzanne was useful in looking after Antoinette. Pierre's ferocious honesty and loyalty were also good in their way. There might have been two parties in the house, Mademoiselle having her passionate partisans both there and in the village, headed by Pierre and Suzanne. But Mademoiselle herself was far too loyal and gentle for any complication of this sort.

She had walked down to the avenue to look after her father as he drove away, and was coming slowly back across the broad, white, sunlit court, an old Clumber spaniel walking gravely beside her, and a little black-and-tan terrier, Rataplan, running here and there.

Antoinette had grown a good deal since she was fourteen, but she was by no means tall, and she did not hold herself very well. She had very little colour, but the soft cream tint of her complexion was not unhealthy; her features, of course, had all their young, delicate beauty; though her face was grave in repose, her large dark eyes were full of smiles and sweetness. Her hair was black, and thick, and curly as ever, though it no longer fell in a mane upon her shoulders. People who had known her mother, the Marquise, who had died so young, were startled by the likeness. Still Antoinette, nearly eighteen, hardly looked grown up. She tied her hair together with a red or blue ribbon; practised her music two hours a day; wrote translations; and went about all the morning in a large holland pinafore. She fed her chickens; worked in her own little garden; went to mass with Suzanne at six o'clock every morning; played games with the dogs; and now and then, though very seldom, went out walking, or driving, or riding with her father. She had had a governess for a year or two after she left the convent, chosen by her grandmother; but in this case Madame de Ferrand's arrangements had not been quite so happy as usual. The good woman worried

Antoinette, and bored the Marquise; she was sent away. Then Madame de Ferrand died, and Antoinette was quite left in the hands of her stepmother, who kissed her, and laughed, and told her she was much too clever and pretty to want any more education. Achille did not interfere; he never differed seriously with his wife; and so the girl was left to her own devices. Nobody cared; certainly not Antoinette, who accepted the situation, as it concerned only herself, with light-hearted indifference, and went on working at her lessons, steadily and alone. Suzanne was too happy that her little Mademoiselle should be restored to her. In truth, the only people who made any remarks on the subject were Monsieur and Madame de Cernay; though they had themselves planned a second marriage for Achille, they were never reconciled to his marrying an Englishwoman, and were ready to think the little Antoinette a much ill-used girl. They were an exception in the neighbourhood, which generally received the new Marquise with great kindness, and was never tired of admiring her beauty, and her good taste in dress and furniture. Achille, with all his good-nature, was a sensitive man; he knew well enough what the Cernays thought of him, and, as a matter of fact, the old intimate friendship between Saint-Bernard and La Tour Blanche had ceased for ever.

As Mademoiselle de Montmirail crossed the court, she was met and stopped by an old peasant-woman coming back from the kitchen door. The old, hard face was pinched with time and poverty; the cap was no longer white; the short jacket and petticoat were in rags; the feet were stuck bare into sabots; but a kindly smile and a quick torrent of jokes and compliments were ready for Mademoiselle. She must peep into the basket, and see what a fine store of scraps the cook had put into it; and then she must listen to a long story of the son who had come home from the army, and all his joy at seeing his old mother again.

This went on till the bell of the Château clanged out over their heads, making it plain that Mademoiselle must go in, so Mère Clopin trotted off with her smiling face, and her rags, and her basket, and Antoinette walked on. But quick steps came trotting up behind her, and she turned round to meet the postman, a soldierly-looking old fellow, with a long moustache and a faded sort of uniform,

who took off his cap with a great flourish, and begged to hand Mademoiselle the letters for the family.

With all these hindrances, Antoinette arrived at last in the dining-room to find her stepmother waiting for her, and the soup getting cold.

"Come, petite," said the Marquise, from the depths of her large chair, "must you be late because your father is not here?"

"Pardon, maman," said Antoinette. "I went down to the avenue to see the last of my husband, and then I stopped to talk to Mère Clopin, and then the postman overtook me—and here are your letters."

"That Mère Clopin of yours is an unconscionable old beggar," said Madame de Montmirail.

She took the letters in her pretty white hands, laid aside those belonging to her husband, and slowly looked over her own. She had a habit of talking English to Antoinette; besides that French was not by any means entirely easy to her, it seemed like carrying on the girl's education, and thus made her conscience comfortable. When M. de Montmirail was there, however, they generally talked French; and English, especially at meals, was a tremendous offence to old Pierre, who considered it supremely bad manners towards himself and the smart young man who helped him.

There was a sort of cloud that morning on Celia's face, generally bright and good-humoured enough. The cloud deepened as she looked over her letters, took out one from among them, and actually frowned over it. But she did not open it till she had finished her soup—cold soup being a thing she detested.

Some people thought that Celia had improved in looks since her marriage, and no one could deny that she was an exceedingly handsome woman. The clear look, the look of youth and innocence, and frank love of fun, which, in spite of all her faults, used to shine in her blue eyes, had darkened, hardened into something different, though the eyes were expressive enough still. The slight young figure was gone too; she had grown into a large and rather lazy-looking woman, and being English, unlike Madame de Cernay, had lost a good deal of life and brilliancy in the change. But still she was good-natured and kind, and ready to enjoy everything pleasant that came in her way. Perhaps she was a little disappointed in life,

on the whole, and had found it rather less easy than she expected to throw herself into all her new surroundings; perhaps her Achilles was a little too much devoted, and bored her slightly sometimes with the overwhelming crowd of his attentions; still, she would not have liked any change in Achilles, and she did not tell anyone what she felt in her heart—that these people were too good for her.

As to Achilles, he had quite forgotten his first impression of Celia—"There is something of the devil in that woman." To him his wife was perfection; in the whole world there was no one so charming. He would have liked to tell M. de Cernay a great deal about her; in fact, the impossibility of this was the only trouble he had.

When the Marquise had finished her soup, she took up the letter and opened it, and read it deliberately. A slow flush stole over her delicate skin, and her lips trembled with the slightest of smiles.

The letter was evidently rather interesting.

"Let me see, what is to-day? Wednesday?" said the Marquise. "And your father will not be at home till Saturday."

"Perhaps not till Sunday," said Antoinette. "Unless you send for him, and then he will come home directly. I wish you would, maman! Five days; it is perfectly enormous!"

"Quite out of the question! Five days!" repeated Celia. "But I can't send for him unless you choose to be ill."

"I am never ill. You must be ill, yourself," said Antoinette, laughing.

"It is no use; we are all as strong as Hercules. Anyhow, I can tell him he must come home on Saturday, because—and yet why should it matter?"

She asked this question of herself, seemingly; then her eyes fell on the letter again; then she stared out of the window, playing an impatient tune with her fingers on the polished table. Then she drank her coffee, and then met the gaze of Antoinette's rather puzzled dark eyes.

"Ah, you don't know what I am talking about?" she said. "Tiens! Do you know this writing?" and she held up an envelope with the Paris post-mark.

"No," said Antoinette. "I never saw it before, but it is the writing of an Englishman. Papa's cousin, Sir John Lefroy, writes a little like that; but this is not from him."

"So you can find out an Englishman."

Don't look so amazed, *ma belle*. Come into the salon, and I will tell you all about it."

In the salon the sun-blinds were down, but long rays of light fell across the shining floor. It was a very different room from what it used to be, shabby, dingy, and damp-stained. The ceiling and chimney-piece were gorgeously painted, the walls were hung with fine old tapestry, and the rows of stately high-backed chairs relaxed so far as to admit a few very comfortable ones for the repose of modern bones. In the corners and the windows, great broad-leaved plants threw shadows. There was a good deal of rich colour, all subdued in tone. Everyone who saw the restored salon, agreed that Madame de Montmirail had made a distinguished success. Even Madame de Cernay was obliged to admire it, though she could not help saying that its one want was the want of original ideas. But this was absurd, after all, for with the "style Louis Treize" to guide you, what do you want with originality?

Celia sat down in one of the comfortable chairs, between two long lines of sunlight, and laid her letters on a table close by, except that interesting one, which she kept in her hand.

Antoinette, in her large pinafore, arranged herself not far off, her dark head bent forward to listen; she looked like a little image of polite attention.

"First I must tell you who this letter is from," said her stepmother. "It is from a certain man named Vincent Percival."

"A relation of Madame Percival?" said Antoinette.

"Not far wrong, *petite*. A near relation; her son—her only son—her only child, and therefore a great treasure—besides being my first cousin."

"*Mais parfaitement!*" murmured Antoinette.

"You are wondering that you never heard of him before? Well, he has been in India half his life—but stop, did not you hear me telling your father, some weeks ago, how he had been in a small fight or two on the frontier, and had been wounded in the shoulder? You were not there? Well, it doesn't matter; so it was. I have not seen him for four years; before I was married. I knew he had come home; I heard it from my aunt the other

day. Now this celebrated hero is in Paris, and writes to ask if he may come down here on Saturday. We used to be friends, you understand. He was kinder to me than some of my relations—when I was a very poor girl, and had no home."

"But then you will be delighted to see him. It is well; it is very well," said Antoinette, in her pretty, broken English.

"Yes, I should like to see him. Anyhow, I suppose he must come," said Celia, and then she dropped into silence, and looked gravely at the floor.

Antoinette sat watching her, smiling a little. She had never heard her step-mother speak with much kindness of her English relations, who seemed on the whole to have been a heartless set of people. It was supposed that Mrs. Percival, her aunt, had not been quite pleased at her marriage; then there was her change of religion, which of course made a barrier, though to Antoinette's mind the Anglican Church was a thing incomprehensible. This cousin evidently rose above the English and Protestant ideas of the family; and no doubt the very visible effort, the affectation almost, so unlike her general way of talking, with which Celia spoke of him, was owing to her feeling of partial estrangement from the rest of the family.

"Papa will be charmed to see your English cousin. He is so fond of the English," said Antoinette presently. "And I am sure he will come back to receive him, if he can."

"If he can't, do you think it will matter?" said Celia. "If Vincent is obliged to come on Saturday, and he can't come back till Sunday?"

There was something quite oddly helpless in the way she said this—she whose habit always was to decide everything for herself, and certainly never to consult her young step-daughter.

"You know best," said Antoinette, the smile deepening in her eyes. "Nobody will think it matters if you don't, *maman!*"

She sprang up from her low seat, crossed the room to Celia, and, stepping behind her, leaned over and lightly kissed the thick gold braids of her hair.

"I must go and feed the chickens," she said, and she darted out of the room, leaving the Marquise alone with Vincent Percival's letter.